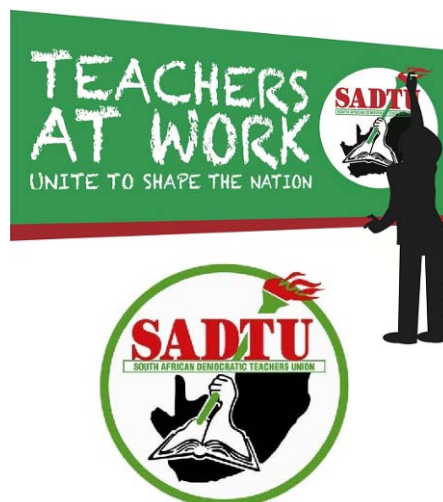




27th April: Freedom Day

Anniversary of South Africa's first universal-franchise election in 1994

A resource-book for educators



Part 1

Legalisation and Return

In South Africa, Freedom Day is celebrated each year on the 27th of April.

This day is the anniversary of South Africa's first universal-franchise election on 27th April 1994, when full national democracy was first practised in South Africa.

The entire election actually took four days to complete, i.e. between the 26th and the 29th of April, 1994. The 27th of April was the first full day of voting for all.

The arrival of democracy is what we are celebrating. Nevertheless, the day is called Freedom Day, and not Democracy Day.

This is because after the 27th of April 1994 the black majority was now free to vote for a government of their choice, whereas previous to that day, the white minority in South Africa had ruled without the consent of the black majority.

The struggle for freedom began when the first white settlers, led by Jan van Riebeeck, landed in the Cape and began to divide the land and rule over it, and this struggle never stopped.

In 1910, the Union of South Africa had been created from the former republics and colonies, by agreement between the British imperial power and the Afrikaners with whom they had been fighting. But black people were not consulted, or given a vote.

Two years later, in 1912, the organisation that is now called the African National Congress was formed. It became the main vehicle of the liberation struggle against minority rule.



1950s

In 1948, the National Party won a whites-only election, and set out to construct irreversible institutions of “apartheid” (racial separation) including whites-only and blacks-only areas, some of them falsely dressed up as new countries.

Faced with strong, well-organised mass campaigns including strikes, stay-at-homes, and boycotts, the National Party government banned the Communist Party of South Africa in 1950, and the African National Congress in 1960. Both organisations continued underground and in exile. They jointly launched an armed struggle in 1962, in the form of the People’s Army, uMkhoto we Sizwe.

The struggle against the white minority regime continued in all forms, inside the country, outside the country, and on the borders of the country, together with armies of other countries, including Cuba.

It was a struggle for “**One Person One Vote in a Unitary State**”. This is what was realised in 1994, and it is what we celebrate on 27th April.

On 2nd February 1990, the white State President of South Africa (de Klerk) announced the unbanning of the ANC, the PAC and the SACP, and the release of Nelson Mandela from prison.



1990

While the unbanning was a concession to the demands of the liberation movement, yet it took more than four more years of struggle, including more bloodshed, before the election of 27th April 1994 that is often referred to as South Africa’s “democratic breakthrough”.

The 1994 democratic breakthrough came about through a combination of negotiations and mass popular organisation.



Groote Schuur Minute

After 2 February, 1990, exiles began to return, and the previously banned organisations began to re-create their structures in legal conditions.

On 2 May 1990 the ANC held formal talks with the National Party government at Groote Schuur, after which a “minute” was signed by both parties.

This was the first of many negotiations that eventually created the conditions for the democratic breakthrough of 1994.

The Groote Schuur Minute confirmed who the main negotiating parties were: the outgoing racial-minority regime, and the incoming national liberation movement – the ANC.

Pretoria Minute

On 6 August the ANC and the National Party government convened at the Presidency in Pretoria, and signed a further minute, committing the ANC to discontinue the armed activities of uMkhonto we Sizwe, and moving towards the lifting of regional States of Emergency by the government.

Part 2

Negotiations and Violence

Organisation

From the date (2 February 1990) of the legalisation of the liberation movement to the date (27 April 1994) of the first universal-franchise election – won by an overwhelming majority by the national liberation movement – more than four years passed, during which time the racist apartheid regime remained in power.

As we have seen in the previous part, by 1990 the pattern of negotiation between the principal parties – the ANC and the then-governing National Party (NP) – had been set. These two remained the main interlocutors, and by 1994 were the main contenders in the election, with the ANC being awarded 63% of the vote and the NP 20%.

It may seem hard to understand why such a long period of time had to pass between the one event, and the other. It was a combination of negotiation, and war.



Returned Veterans of Exile

The ANC had to establish legal, open branches all over the country, and to hold a full National Conference. This it did in July, 1991, in Durban. It was the 48th National Conference of the ANC. The 47th ANC National Conference had been held, also in Durban, in 1959, under the Presidency of Chief Luthuli.

In the early post-1990 days, the ANC was also busy incorporating the United Democratic Front (UDF) into its structures. Since its founding in 1983, the UDF had been the open face of the liberation struggle within the country.

The SACP held its 8th National Congress in December 1991, in Johannesburg. It was the first legal one since the banning of the Communist Party of South Africa in 1950.

The next (49th) ANC National Conference did not take place until December, 1994, long after the election of April 27th of that year, which we are celebrating.

Violence

Meanwhile in different parts of the country, different kinds of violent acts were being perpetrated against the ordinary supporters of the liberation movement.

The period in between 1992 and 1994 was not a time of peace, but of accelerating violent struggle during which thousands of people were killed. These events included, war in KwaZulu Natal, war in Alexandra Township, apparently random “train violence” in the Witwatersrand, the Boipatong massacre, and many other massacres.

It is painful for those who lived through those years to remember what happened.

In practice the armed struggle continued, in conditions where the People’s Army had been officially stood down. This was an extremely difficult time for the liberation movement and for all of the people of the country.



At Sam Ntuli Stadium, Thokoza

The hidden actors were the same as the legal, open actors. There was no “third force”. The atrocities leading up to 1994 were manufactured by the apartheid regime. The legal and the illegal forces were the same.

Referendum

The apartheid regime had banned the SACP in 1950, and the ANC in 1960, but it could not defeat them. The unbanning of these organisations in 1990 was an admission of the regime's defeat. On 17 March 1992, a referendum of the white electorate was held to allow this white electorate to express support for the National Party's actions, including the unbanning of two years earlier. More than two-thirds of the white voters – actually 69% – voted to support their government's actions.

But in practice the struggle continued, right up to the time of the 1994 universal-franchise election, after which the violence became less, but it still continued, and it still continues today.

Negotiations

A National Peace Accord was signed on 14 September 1991 between 27 structures including the minority government and the National Party, the ANC, the SACP and COSATU.

On 24 October 1991 the Goldstone Commission was appointed by the government with powers to investigate the growing violence in the country.

On 20 December 1991 the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA) talks between many of the actors under the chairmanship of judges, began. This session, known as CODESA 1, appointed working groups, and re-convened as CODESA 2 on the 15th of May. In the mean time, the white referendum had been held, during which the National Party leader de Klerk, who as State President had released Mandela and unbanned the ANC and SACP, said that they would never concede majority rule.

The second plenary session of CODESA, known as CODESA 2, began on 15 May, but it soon bogged down on the question of the Constitution, and majority rule.

On 17 June 1992 at Boipatong 45 mainly ANC supporters at a funeral vigil were killed, and others severely wounded, in a massacre perpetrated by Inkatha Freedom Party supporters with assistance from the apartheid police. Nelson Mandela on behalf of the ANC denounced the government's complicity in this and the other violence in the country. The CODESA talks never formally reconvened.



At CODESA

Part 3

Death of Hani

Bisho Massacre

After the failure of CODESA in the winter of 1992, the ANC began a campaign of rolling mass action to build support throughout the country. On 3 September the ANC demanded the removal of Oupa Gqozo, the dictator in charge of the Ciskei Bantustan. De Klerk refused, and on 7 September 1992 a crowd of 80,000 assembled at Bisho, led by, among others, the General Secretary of the SACP, Chris Hani, and the Secretary-General of the ANC, Cyril Ramaphosa. Gqozo's troops opened fire on a section of the crowd, killing 28 ANC supporters and wounding more than 200.

But support for the ANC increased. Chris Hani toured the country, raising support.

ROU and MPNF

In the atmosphere following the Bisho Massacre, the ANC was able on 26 September 1992 to get a Record of Understanding signed between itself and the government which "laid the basis for resumption of the negotiating process". Negotiations continued at the venue in Kempton Park previously used for the failed CODESA talks.

An internal ANC report dated 25 November 1992 said among other things, the following:

"The de Klerk regime has suffered a renewed crisis of legitimacy. It continues to fail to win the allegiance of the majority. The regime's camp stands more divided than it ever was since the unbanning of the ANC; its unpatriotic front with some bantustans has collapsed..."

"Also in the recent period, the ANC has established itself as a legal national political organization; it commands the support of the majority of South Africa. The liberation movement enjoys the capacity to mobilise large-scale mass action."

A more formal Multiparty Negotiating Forum (MPNF) convened on 1 April 1993.



Two struggle photos by Cedric Nunn of "Afrapix"

The balance of forces had now changed. Consequently the right-wing reactionaries became more violently aggressive. Violence, measured in the rate of deaths, rose through 1992 and 1993 to peak in early 1994. The IFP withdrew from negotiations.

On the 10th of April 1993, the Easter Saturday, Polish anti-communist Janusz Waluś shot and killed Chris Hani in cold blood outside the Hani family home in Alberton. Waluś is still in prison. Clive Derby-Lewis was released on parole in 2015, on the grounds that he is dying from cancer. The two murderers have never revealed the full story of their plot, or who else was involved.

Hani was 50 years old and a leader of the ANC, the SACP, and uMkhonto we Sizwe. He was going to be a major leader of the country. He could have been a President.

The tragic martyrdom of Comrade Chris Hani was the most dramatic moment in the four years, 1990-1994. The whole country was shocked, but instead of chaos, the effect was that the outcome of the process was suddenly not in doubt.

Another of the most-respected leaders – Oliver Reginald Tambo – died two weeks later, on 24 April 1993, of natural causes. Tambo's funeral, like Hani's was a demonstration of the central place of the ANC in the hearts of South Africans.

The clownish invasion of the Kempton Park World Trade Centre, where the Multiparty Negotiating Forum (MPNF) negotiations were happening, by the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) on 25 June 1993 only demonstrated the depths of absurdity and indignity to which the reactionaries had sunk.



O R Tambo



Chris Hani

Interim constitution

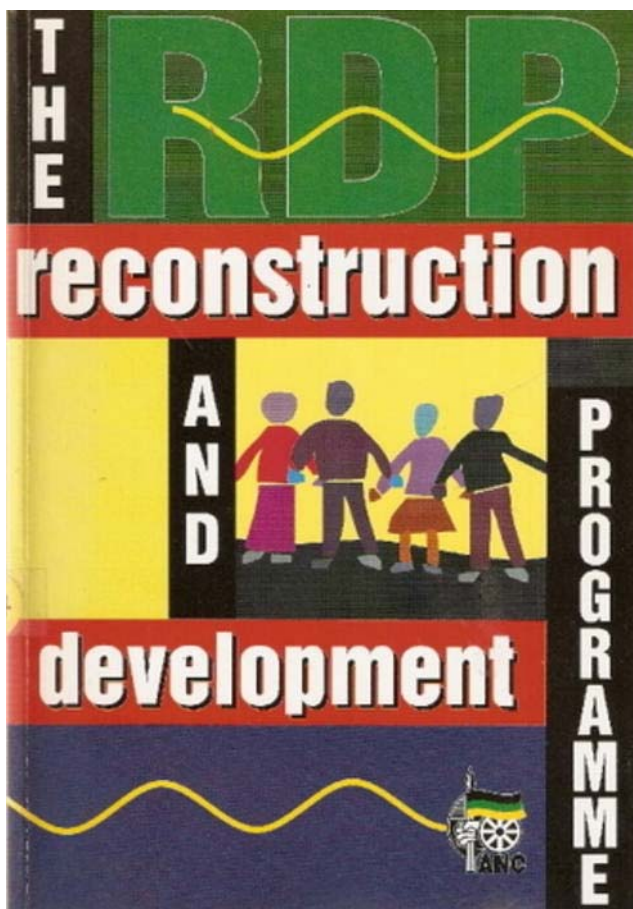
The MPNF negotiations continued, and it succeeded in drafting an Interim Constitution, which was then passed by the white Parliament, in late 1993, and assented to by de Klerk as State President on 25 January 1994.

It was this Interim Constitution that allowed for the holding of the universal-franchise majority-rule election which took place on 27 April 1994, the day that the Interim Constitution came into force.

In 1991, the ANC was still weak. Only in the third year of its unbanning did it become once again the well-organised mass phenomenon that it had been in the late 1950s, before it was banned.

The National Party played for time, but time was on the side of the ANC.

The Manifesto of the ANC, going in to the election campaign, was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) document. The ANC had used the entire four years between 1990 and 1994 as an election campaign, which is why it won so well.



RDP Document: The ANC's 1994 Manifesto



Election Poster

Part 4

The Election

There was no separate voter registration. Anyone with a green ID book was able to vote, including people who were later excluded, like those on Resident's Permits.

26th April was for the disabled. The next two days were for ordinary voters and the last day was an extra one to make sure that everyone was able to vote.

Nearly 20 million voted. It was a very joyful occasion, respectful, and peaceful. It was called a miracle, but of course it was not a miracle. It was the product of a struggle, and a struggle that had continued until days before the ballot.

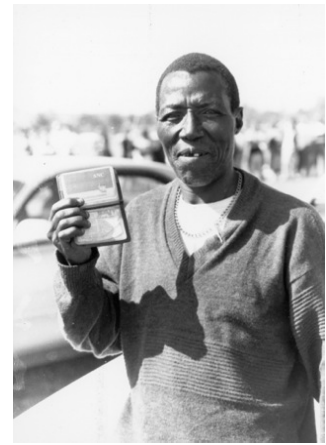
On 12 March 1994 the AWB tried to involve itself in a *coup d'état* in the Bophuthatswana Bantustan. It was defeated and humiliated. Several of its members were killed. This was the end of the Bop bantustan, and of all the bantustans.

On 24 April 1994, ANC Johannesburg North East branch secretary Susan Keane, 37, who was the 41st candidate on the ANC's regional election list, died of her injuries in hospital. She was one of nine or ten people killed in a bomb attack. Nine AWB members were convicted in 1996 for this murder.

How could one feel joy while voting when your friend had been killed like that, three days before? Pain and joy were not far apart in those times. Susan Keane was buried in a plain pine coffin. The service was at the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Johannesburg, not far from where she was killed. There were many martyrs who died for this thing called freedom.



Nelson Mandela votes



Nelson Mandela sworn in as President

BALLOT PAPER

SAMPLE ONLY

Make your mark next to the party you choose.
 Esisa leshwao pela mokgolo wa o o kgethang.
 Yenza uphawu eapeli kwelembu solikhetsako.
 Enda mungho ebelo ka vanda leli o ni khetha.
 Baza leshwao go lelagana le leleko la gago.
 Yenza uphawu laho edere nehangano oyikhetsako.

Place a mark large die party van u kause.
 Dira leshwao la gago go lebona le phatli yeo o e kgethang.
 Kha vha le leshwao phanda ha dzaagano line vha khetha.
 Yenza uphawu lekho ocoleni kwaga eko ulikhethayo.
 Dweba uphawu eadhlani eadhlani kwehangano oyikhethayo.

PAN AFRICANIST CONGRESS OF AZANIA		PAC		
SPORTS ORGANISATION FOR COLLECTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS AND EQUAL RIGHTS		SOCCER		
THE KEEP IT STRAIGHT AND SIMPLE PARTY		KISS		
VRYHEIDFRONT - FREEDOM FRONT		VF-FF		
WOMEN'S RIGHTS PEACE PARTY		WRPP		
WORKERS' LIST PARTY		WLP		
XIMOKO PROGRESSIVE PARTY		XPP		
AFRICA MUSLIM PARTY		AMP		
AFRICAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC PARTY		ACDP		
AFRICAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT		ADM		
AFRICAN MODERATES CONGRESS PARTY		AMCP		
AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS		ANC		
DEMOCRATIC PARTY - DEMOKRATIESE PARTY		DP		
DIKWANKWETLA PARTY OF SOUTH AFRICA		DPSA		
FEDERAL PARTY		FP		
LUSO - SOUTH AFRICAN PARTY		LUSAP		
MINORITY FRONT		MF		
NATIONAL PARTY - NASIONALE PARTY		NP		

Presented by the Voter Education Programme of the Independent Electoral Commission.

Part 5

Victory and the GNU

The election of 27 April 1994 was an ANC victory of huge proportions. Not quite 63% of the vote with the National Party having just over 20% and the IFP less than 11%. The remaining 6% was split between many small parties.

By the 2014 election the National Party had disappeared and the IFP only got just over 2%, but the ANC still got over 62%.

Freedom does not exist without politics, and politics does not exist without actual parties. The victory we celebrate as a nation was not an abstract thing.

The victory of 1994 represented what the ANC stood for, which is one person one vote in a unitary state – a state without Bantustans in it – and for a non-racist, non-sexist, democratic and prosperous South Africa where the fruits of the economy and the wealth of our country are shared and enjoyed by all through inclusive growth and meaningful economic transformation.

The ANC cannot be taken out of the history of South Africa, any more than the late Nelson Mandela who became the President of the country when he was sworn in after the 27 April 1994 election, being the leader of the ANC, which had won the election so resoundingly.





The GNU

In accordance with its agreements prior to the 1994 election, the ANC created a Government of National Unity (GNU) which incorporated the National Party and the Inkatha Freedom Party. This state of affairs lasted just over two years, until in June, 1996, when the National Party left the government by its own decision. The GNU technically remained in force until 1999, and the IFP continued to serve in government until 2004.



The GNU

Part 6

The ANC Lives, The ANC Leads

Since the beginning of 1994, the ANC has won five national general elections, usually with a greater majority than it won in 1994.

Since the election of 1994, South Africa has had four different Presidents. They are President Mandela; President Mbeki, President Motlanthe, and President Zuma whose second term will expire in 2019, when a new President will be elected, who will be the fifth fully democratic President of South Africa.

In 1996, the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) was effectively dropped and replaced by the Growth, Employment and Redistribution policy that was not part of the 1994 Manifesto. This “laissez-faire” or “market-led, trickle-down” neo-liberal policy caused more than ten years of strife within the ANC, and between the ANC and its Alliance partners.

By 2007 when the ANC held its 52nd National Conference in Polokwane, the majority of the ANC’s structures had rejected GEAR and instead wanted planned development. There was a change of leadership at Polokwane and an expressed determination to have an interventionist, planning government. After winning the 2009 National Elections the first Zuma administration created the National Planning Commission and charged it with creating South Africa’s first full and sovereign National Development Plan (NDP).

After an energetic process of consultation the NDP was adopted at the 53rd ANC National Conference in 2012 and became the backbone of the ANC’s Manifesto for the 2014 National Elections, once again attracting outright majority electoral support into the 60s per cent.

During President Zuma’s first term South Africa entered the BRICS international co-operation with Brazil, Russia, India and China, adding an external planning dimension. Both the NDP And the BRICS are helping South Africa to be free. All of these things can be celebrated on Freedom Day.



